

The main themes addressed in this guide are:

- TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTIONS/THEIR EFFECTS, AND WAYS TO DO THAT.
- GIVING POWER BACK TO THE OTHER PERSON THROUGH WAYS TO SUPPORT THEM
- SEEKING HELP FOR YOURSELF. (WHILE YOU MAY FEEL LIKE PEOPLE WILL HATE YOU - MANY WILL RESPECT YOUR OWNING UP TO YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT ANOTHER PERSON. (IT IS HEALING FOR MANY OF US).
- ASK THE OTHER PERSON FIRST. ASKING PUTS CHOICE BACK IN THEIR HANDS.
- ASKING IS EMPOWERING.
- CHANGING THE ATTITUDES YOU HAVE. ATTITUDES ARE KEY IN ASSAULT (IE-BLAME, ENTITLEMENT, RESPECT, DENIAL...)

I use the word "ASSAULT" TO COVER ALL DEGREES OF VIOLATIONS. SORRY IF THAT IS ALIENATING.

SUGGESTIONS? COMMENTS? FEEDBACK? WANT TO WORK TOGETHER? ALMOST ANYTHING, CONTACT:

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This guide offers suggestions for what to do if you're told that you've assaulted/hurt/violated someone or crossed their boundaries. These things can be sexual, but do not have to be.

Assaulters are not villains. They/we are not doomed. We are humyn, and how we address these situations (and ourselves), after being told of it, makes a hell of a difference. Literally.

Dealing with assault is possible. It is your responsibility.

You can make a big difference by owning up to it and taking concerted measures to address it.

You can be loved. We can heal from this. Don't give up. This helps.

Being called out is a gift. It is an opportunity to grow. Embrace that.

Assault is cowardly. Owning up to it is brave.

Good luck.

# What to Do When Someone Tells you that you violated their boundaries, made them feel uncomfort- able, or committed assault.

a start



## Take Responsibility for Your Actions.

- APOLOGIZE (IF THAT'S HARD: DO NOT SAY "I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY" BECAUSE THAT PUTS THE BLAME ON THEM, INSTEAD SAY "I'M SORRY THAT MY ACTIONS HURT YOU.")
- ADMIT IF YOU FUCKED UP ON A BOUNDARY OR WENT TOO FAR.
- ADMIT WHAT YOUR BODY DID
- ADMIT WHAT YOU SAID
- ADMIT WHAT YOU DID NOT SAY OR ASK
- FIGHT OFF FEELINGS OF DEFENSIVENESS. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO GET PAST THAT, TELL THE OTHER PERSON YOU NEED A BREAK SO YOU CAN RESPOND PROPERLY. SEEK HELP.
- ADMIT TO YOURSELF THAT YOUR ACTIONS CAN AFFECT OTHERS NEGATIVELY, REGARDLESS OF YOUR INTENTIONS.
- KNOW YOU ARE NOT DOOMED, BUT YOU HAVE HURT ANOTHER PERSON. PEOPLE WILL SUPPORT YOUR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS IT.
- ADMIT THAT EVEN IF YOU DO NOT REMEMBER THE EVENT, OR RECALL IT DIFFERENTLY, OR IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE YOU \*WOULD\* HAVE DONE OR SAID IT - ~~REA~~ THAT IT IS POSSIBLE AND WHAT THE OTHER PERSON EXPERIENCED IS VALID.
- IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW WHAT YOU DID MADE SOMEONE FEEL ASSAULTED, DO NOT PUT THEM ON TRIAL OR ARGUE, INSTEAD, SEEK HELP (OPTIONS LISTED LATER ON).

- ASK THEM HOW THEY FEEL/ FELT.
- ASK THEM WHAT YOU COULD DO TO HELP THEM FEEL EMPOWERED.
- DO YOUR BEST TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.
- ~~BE~~ EVEN IF YOU THINK THEIR BOUNDARIES/NEEDS ARE EXTREME. SUPPORT, ENABLE, RESPECT THEM. THAT IS SUPPORT. BEING SUPPORTED AND FEELING SAFE ARE KEY TO HEALING AND REBUILDING TRUST.
- DO NOT ARGUE, QUESTION, OR SUGGEST CHANGES TO THEIR NEEDS.
- ADMIT IF YOU CANNOT HANDLE THEIR NEEDS. SEEK SUPPORT.
- MAKE SACRIFICES TO HELP THEM FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED. YOU GIVING UP A LITTLE IS WORTH RESTORING THE POWER YOUR ACTIONS TOOK FROM THEM.

- ASK THEM IF IT'S OKAY TO BRING ~~UP~~ THIS SUBJECT UP TO THEM OR IF YOU SHOULD WAIT FOR THEM TO BRING IT UP.
- ASK HOW AND WHEN THEY WANT TO BE CHECKED IN WITH. CHECK IN.
- ASK WHAT FORMS OF PHYSICAL CONTACT THEY ARE OKAY WITH NOW. KEEP CHECKING IN CONSTANTLY.
- IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE PHYSICAL, FIGURE OUT WHAT WILL ENSURE THAT. IE- YOU STOP DRINKING, SLEEP WITH CLOTHES ON, REAFFIRM THAT DECISION ALOUD BEFORE BED, TALK ABOUT AND AVOID TOUCHING BODY PARTS THAT TURN EITHER OF YOU ON).

- IF IT'S OKAY WITH THEM (ASK), TELL EVERYONE WHAT YOU DID. THIS TAKES RESPONSIBILITY, OPENS YOURSELF UP FOR HELP IN CHANGING/DEALING, AND BREAKS APART THE SILENCE AROUND ASSAULT.

## Seek Help: <sup>(especially to meet their needs)</sup>

- CALL AN ASSAULT HOTLINE
- ASK A ~~GOOD~~ <sup>(SAFE)</sup> FRIEND (TRY TO ASK THE OTHER PERSON IF IT'S OKAY TO TALK TO SUCH PERSON - IF MUTUALLY KNOWN - AND WHAT IS OKAY TO DISCLOSE) TRY TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'S NOT ALSO BEEN CALLED OUT
- FIND A GO-BETWEEN PERSON WITH WHOM YOU ARE BOTH OKAY WITH TO HELP NAVIGATE ISSUES.
- CHOOSE WISELY
- SEEK PROFESSIONAL THERAPY. INDIVIDUAL OR COUPLES COUNSELING CAN BE FREE IN MOST CITIES. EVEN IF YOU ARE THE MOST RADICAL PERSON, ABUSE/BOUNDARY ISSUES ARE OMNIPOTENT. THERAPISTS CAN HELP. JUST FIND ONE WHO FITS.
- LISTEN TO SURVIVORS AND TAKE ADVICE.
- READ ABOUT BOUNDARIES AND ASSAULT CHNT: TRY FEMINIST/QUEER FRIENDLY BOOKSHOPS, LOOK THOSE BOOKS UP AT LIBRARY
- THINK ABOUT IT. THIS MAY BE SCARY AT FIRST - OR OVERWHELMING - BUT YOUR LIFE WILL BE BETTER FOR ADDRESSING IT.

- ~~FEEL~~ HONORED TO HAVE THE CHANCE TO CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR, WHETHER YOU TWO REMAIN CLOSE OR NOT.

## Thank Them

- FOR HAVING THE COURAGE TO CALL YOU OUT.
- SEIZE THE CHANCE TO CHANGE